

EUGENE MURRAY-AARON (1852-1940): FORGOTTEN FIRST EDITOR OF *ENTOMOLOGICAL NEWS*¹

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When author JASB took on the editorship of *Entomological News* (November 2003), he decided to learn about the early history of the journal. Until recently, Henry Skinner, Editor from 1890 to 1920, was cited as the first Editor of *Entomological News*. However, upon opening the first issue of the journal, we noticed that Eugene Murray-Aaron, herein abbreviated EMA, got the first two issues (January and February 1890) off the ground when this journal was known as "Entomological News and Proceedings of the Entomological Section, Academy of Natural Sciences, Philadelphia." In addition to entomology, EMA had diverse professional interests including natural history, geography, cartography, travel, human biology, cycling, government, etc. Murray-Aaron's literary fiction and scientific journalism writings are direct and captivating, often reflecting strong views. What follows is an abstract on the life of EMA taken from a much larger manuscript in preparation.

Eugene Murray-Aaron was born in Norristown, a small city located northeast of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (United States), on August 4, 1852. Reverend Samuel Aaron, an ardent advocate of temperance, antislavery, and scholarship in southeastern Pennsylvania and eastern central New Jersey during the middle third of the 19th century, was his step-grandfather. EMA served as the last Editor of *Papilio* (1884). Murray-Aaron's passion in entomology focused on skippers (Hesperiidae), an interest shared with his editorial successor of greater fame, Henry Skinner, with whom he co-authored only one paper (1889 *Canadian Entomologist* 21:126-131, 145-149). During the 1880s and early 1890s, EMA traveled extensively throughout the Caribbean, Central, and South America. His major natural history books, entitled *Butterfly Hunters in the Caribbees* (1884) and *The New Jamaica* (with E. M. Bacon, 1890) were undoubtedly conceived there. While the reasons for his brief tenure as Editor of *Entomological News* are not completely clear, there seems to have been differences of opinion between EMA, Skinner, and Philip Powell Calvert (third Editor of *Entomological News*) on the best use of the printed space in *Entomological News*. During 1893 and 1894, EMA was columnist for the Sunday science section of *The Los Angeles Times* and other major newspapers in the USA. Murray-Aaron served as geographic editor for the George F. Cram Company from 1899 to 1917. While EMA did not return to the scholarly study of insects, his love for entomology remained with him until his later years. At 82, EMA was reported gardening in Chicago (Illinois) and living with assistance from the government as his investments had become worthless. Eugene Murray-Aaron died on September 19, 1940.

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